(b) their location, the number of workers involved and year of closure;

(c) the time-bound action plan by the Tea Board to re-open these gardens;

(d) whether any action is being taken by Government for giving relief to the workers, affected by the closure;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) As per available information, 33 tea gardens are lying closed, of which 17 are in Kerala, 14 in West Bengal and 2 in Assam. The depressed price situation since mid-1999 coupled with other factors like high cost of production and low prices of tea have affected the viability of tea gardens resulting in the closure/abandonment of some of the tea gardens in the country. The total number of workers affected due to closure is about 31,000.

(c) to (e) A package for rehabilitation of closed tea gardens is being worked out in consultation with concerned Ministries/Departments/ Organisations.

(f) Does not arise.

Extension of Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme

3667. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation regarding the extension of Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme beyond March 31,2007;

(b) if so, the steps taken to encourage the existing exporters who may be benefited by this extension; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. DEPB scheme has been extended for one year with

effect from 1.4.2007 *vide* Customs Notification No. 48/2007 dated 29.03.2007.

Salt-pan workers in India

3668. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of salt-pan workers in India as on 31st March, 2007, State-wise;

(b) what is the total amount of salt cess collected from Gujarat and " Maharastra during the last three years State-wise; and

(c) how much from the amount was spent for the welfare of salt-pan workers; State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) The estimated number of salt workers during 2006 is as below:—

State	Number of Salt workers
Gujarat	81408
Tamil Nadu	16482
Andhra Pradesh	15478
Rajasthan	9995
Maharashtra	1987
Orissa	1425
West Bengal	235
Karnataka	129
Goa	84
Himachal Pradesh	30
TOTAL	127253